



Services for Community Development: A Study in the Context of Kerala State Central Library

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Abstract

Public library is a human institution in its entirety for the public, by the public and of the public. They are indispensable to improve literacy, inspire imagination, and expand personal horizons. They support formal as well as informal education at all levels, enable access to a common cultural heritage and in general make powerful citizens. This paper analyses the role of Kerala State Central Library in the overall development of the community.

Key words: Public Libraries; Community Information Centers; Community Information Services; Kerala State Central Library.

1. Introduction

According to Satyanarayana and Vijakumar (2008)¹ "Public library means whereby the record of human thoughts, ideas and the expression of his creative imagination world are openly available to all". Rishi Pal Bhardwaj (2005)² states that the libraries slowly but surely develop a sense of goodwill and respect for the other groups, an appreciation of the difference in language, religion, customs and manners. He also opined that sectarian life styles will be substituted by democratic life patterns and in this sense, a public library justifies its existence as democratic institution and does play an important role in building, well informed, skilled individuals and tries to achieve this in a democratic way. Adequate Public Library Service is a basic input for the social, political and economic development of a country. Public Library as a Community Information Centre, it



is to be considered as an instrument of social change. In order to improve living standards of society, the public library has its goals to increase facilities. Public libraries can coordinate programmes for continuing education, sponsor cultural and recreational events and also provide materials for specialized reference and research. Proper functioning of the State Central Library will support other libraries in the state, including academic and research libraries.

2. Kerala State Central Library, Thiruvananthapuram

State Central Library is defined as "a library maintained by State funds for the use of State officials and employees, and usually for the use of all citizens of the State". One of the most important provisions made by the Library Acts in India is the creation of an apex public library in each State. This apex library is called by different Public Library Acts either as "State Central Library", or "State Library" and it is supposed to assume a leadership role to guide all the public libraries in the State.

Kerala State Central Library (KSCL) is considered as one of the oldest libraries in India and the first public library in Kerala, established in the year 1829 AD during the reign of His Highness Sree Swathi Thirunal Maharaja of Travancore with the name of Trivandrum People's Library. In 1898 the library opened to the public. In 1958 the Government declared this library as the "State Central Library of Kerala".

Though the Act has not provided for a State Library Service or a network of public libraries comprising of district libraries and other public libraries, the KSCL continues to be a separate department of the Government under Higher Education. The Act gives powers to the State Library Council to appoint and control required officers and employees for library development.

3. Review of related literature

Sarada (1986)⁴ has conducted an intensive study of branch library in Pendurthi village in Visakapattanam taluk in Andhra Pradesh. She analyzed the information needs of the village community and the nature of policy of the government towards the public library. Venkatappaiah (1999)⁵ stressed the need to formulate a policy covering various areas of services, supporting education,



preservation of cultural heritage, information sources, human resources, private and aided libraries, comprehensive library legislation and restructuring the existing library acts in India for public library services in view of the recent developments emerging in the field. Vijayakumar and Kumar (2001)⁶ have made quantitative study on different aspects of rural libraries such as functions, staff, finance, collections, services and facilities in Shimoga district of Karnataka. Ranjith (2004)⁷ has conducted a study on the rural libraries in Kerala, this study suggests the integration of public libraries under KSLC with a library network using a web enabled system that act as an interactive public interface to enable the public for effective utilization of the library resources. Parvathamma and Shanker Reddy (2009)⁸ discussed the results of a survey conducted on the use of information sources and services of public libraries in Bidar District. The study helps in understanding the public libraries need for framing appropriate policies related to collection development and improve the quality of services for motivating users to use the library to enhance their competence level. Laila (2010)⁹ explains the role of public libraries in promoting non-formal education in Kerala and also gives brief history of public library movement in Kerala. Jayakumara and Khaiser Nikam (2012)¹⁰ gives a brief account of perception of young adult users towards public library services, to know the purpose for which young adults visit the library, factors that motivate them to make optimum use of the library. Prabin and Krishnapada (2014)¹¹ attempted to assess the library awareness among the non-users of Government and Government sponsored public libraries in the hilly areas of Darjelling district of West Bengal and concluded that there is need for improvement in public library services so that the non-users may get attracted to the library. In addition, the operations of the library should be automated. Pratap (2014)¹² highlights the role of public libraries in the society and its objectives and also reveals how the public libraries are in the community development process. Raymond and Kemparaju (2007)¹³ examine the concept of public libraries in general, as well as the state of public libraries in India in the light of the new and emerging technological dispensation. Rachel (2011)¹⁴ also narrated the community development role of public libraries to build a strong



community. White (2014)¹⁵ viewed the public libraries as a center for lifelong learning and community development.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of the study were as follows:

- ♦ To evaluate the information sources and services available in the KSCL
- ♦ To identify the existing infrastructural facilities available in the Library
- ♦ To examine the human resources in the KSCL
- ♦ To evaluate the community activities undertaken by the Library.

4. Scope and Limitations of the Study

This study is on the role of public libraries in the society in the context of services of KSCL for community development. The study envisaged to analyse the leading role of KSCL in providing a networked services for the entire State of Kerala for community development. As the study is based on a survey in the KSCL, it cannot cover the entire State of Kerala.

5. Methodology

The study adopted descriptive survey research in KSCL. The library has More than one Lakh registered members and 75,000 members were active in position. The study used structured questionnaire for State Librarian, professional Staff and users in KSCL to collect data. Telephone and face to face interviews were also conducted with the State librarian and other professional staff. Observational visits were also done.

6. Data analysis

Library Building:- The KSCL has 2.58 acres of land and building about 30,000 square feet area in three floors with Stack Room 17,304 Sq. Ft, Reading Room 3,573 Sq. Ft. and Children's Room 4, 268 Sq. Ft.

Library Collection:- As per the records of KSCL, during the period 2013-2014 the total budget of the library is 2, 82, 25,178/-. Library has rich



collection of books in many languages like English, Hindi, Malayalam, Urdu etc. It has 4, 22,841 books, including purchased and gifted, 612 periodicals, 690 CD / DVDs, 1500 bound volumes and 28 newspapers.

Table: 1Total Collection of KSCL

Items	Total Number
Books	4,22,841
Periodicals	612
CD/DVD Documents	690
Bound Volumes	1500

Table:2 Number of Books Added

2010-11	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014
7025	11980	18,274	18,768

Table 2 shows the number of Books added during 2010-2011, 2011-2012, 2012-2013, and 2013-2014. As per the table during the period 2010-11(7025) numbers, 2011-12(11980), 2012-13(18,274), and 2013-2014 (18,768).

Table: 3 Number of Periodicals subscribed in KSCL during 2014

Periodicals	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bimonthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Total
Malayalam	20	8	45	1	1	1	76
English	13	15	69	6	2	2	107
Tamil	6	6	2				14
Hindi	1	2	2				5
Children's Malayalam	5	4	6	4		15	
Children's-English	1	2	19	1		21	
Total	46	35	143	8	3	3	238



Table 3 shows the total 238 periodicals subscribed in KSCL during the period of 2014. It reveals that total number of periodicals subscribed in English is 107 and next comes Malayalam with 76 journals. It also subscribed 21 children's magazines in English.

Table: 4 Number of periodicals received on gratis in KSCL during 2014

Periodicals	Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	Bimonthly	Quarterly	Half yearly	Total
Malayalam	9	6	107	4	2	-	128
English	3		35	2	3	-	43
Tamil			2			-	2
Hindi						-	2
Others						-	1
Total	12	6	147	6	5	-	176

Table 4 shows that 176 periodicals were received in KSCL on complimentary basis of which periodicals in Malayalam comprises the largest with 128 numbers.

Table 5: Furniture Available in KSLC

Items	Qty
Almirah /Shelf/Rack Steel/ wooden	750
Bench/Chair/Stool	964
Black Board	1
Book stand steel/Wooden	77
Catalogue Cabinet	38
Charge Tray	52
Box	4
Ladder Aluminium	2
Locker	13
Notice Board	06
Property Counter with cubicles	2
Screen	12
Tray	10
Table/Teapoy	233
Trolley	02
Wooden box	02



Table 5 shows the adequacy of furniture available in KSCL. It reveals actual number of each item.

Table 6: Available Human Resources in KSCL

	Number of Staff
State Librarian	1
Other Professionals	44
Other Categories	49
Total	94

The above figure shows the number of posts sanctioned in KSCL is 94 of which 49 is non-professionals. Besides these staff more than six staff appointed as a temporarily.

Table 6:Details of Equipments in KSCL

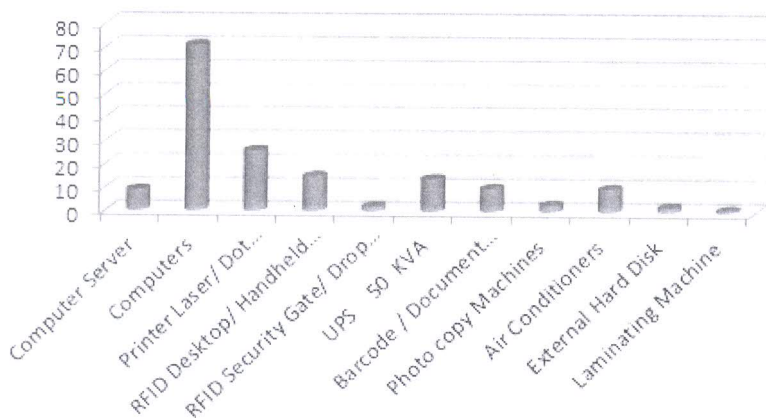
Computer Server	9
Computer	71
Printer Laser/ Dot Matrix/ Ink Jet/ Barcode	26
RFID Desktop/Handheld Reader	15
RFID Security Gate/ Drop Box	2
UPS 50 KVA	14
Barcode / Document Scanner	10
Photo copy Machines	3
Air Conditioners	10
External Hard Disk	2
Laminating Machine	1

8. Services offered by KSCL

Following are the major services offered by the library:

Lending Service: - Books except reference books and journals are loaned to members for home reading. Duration of loan period is 30

IT Equipments in KSCL



days for books and seven days for magazines which can be renewed unless there is no reservation for the same. There is no reservation and renewal for magazines.

Reference Service:-A well-furnished A/C Reference and Information Centre is functioning in the first floor with rich collection of reference sources. About 200 users were visiting the reference section per day on an average.

- ♦ **Closed Reference Section:** Rare and precious old books, Back volumes of journals and dailies are kept here for reference. Admission is given to users on written request.
- ♦ **Reprographic service:** Xerox facility is provided for copying pages of documents on payment.
- ♦ **Gazette Section:** Kerala Gazette Section is a repository of Gazette published by the Government of Kerala. Certified and Non Certified extracts of Kerala Government Gazette will be issued on written request on payment.
- ♦ **Data Conversion Certificate:** Data Conversion certificate from Malayalam Era to Christian era and vice versa is issued on written request. This service is chargeable Rs.50/- per certificate.



- ♦ **British Council Library:** A separate section in the library to members is started using the books received from the former British Council Library and will function as per the library hours.
- ♦ **Internet Browsing Centre:** This center in KSCL was started on 2004. The working hours of this center will be 10am to 5pm. On all working days except Sunday. Browsing, scanning, printing CD writing etc. provided at nominal cost by the Library.

Table 8: Facility in Net browsing Centre

Net Cabin	15 nos.
Computers	16 nos.
ACs	4 nos.
Printer / Photocopier	2

This facility is extensively used for internet browsing, online application, student project preparation, ticket reservation, scanning, printing, CD writing, etc. provided at a nominal cost. Table 8 shows the details of available facilities existing in internet browsing center in KSCL.

- ♦ **Digital Collections:** Library has a digital collection in searchable format of 707 (3, 28,268 pages) books, including English (644) and Malayalam (63) books. Full text retrieval is possible using Malayalam Script. This is the first multilingual bibliographic information system (Unicode). Gazettes St. George Gazettes, Travancore Gazettes (1903), Travancore-Kochi Gazettes (1942) and Kerala Gazettes (1956) it is the authoritative and reliable records. Gazettes from 1973-1985 Total Pages 2, 44,337 in expense Rs39.99 Laksh and 1985-2005 total pages 4, 88,698 in expense Rs79.99 Lakhs, users can access the same through online..
- ♦ **Children's Section:** This section is functioning in the ground floor of the New Heritage Model building where the children's wing of the State Central Library is accommodated. The various periodicals and books are arranged in this section with multimedia facilities for the best use of Children. No additional charge is being levied from children.



- ♦ **Auditorium:** An Auditoriums available in the State Central Library Thiruvananthapuram which is being rented out as per the rates prescribed by the Government for various functions except those organized by political parties and individuals.
- ♦ **Certificate course in Library & Information Science (CLISc)**

Library is conducting a certificate course in Library and information Science. The duration of the course is 6 months. There are 41 seats for this course. The Government's scheme of Earn While You Learn has been successfully implemented during the year 2005.

- ♦ **Orientation Programmes:** At the time of Joining a new member, KSCL Give Printed brochure consisting all about the services of library. It ensures inform the public of what materials are available in their collections and how to access that information
- ♦ **Summer Class:** Summer School Programmes for children on various entertainments and knowledge activities occasionally conducted during the month of April-May every year. Besides these the following services also conducted by KSCL.
- ♦ **Publicity/ Propaganda:** Propaganda through the newspaper, radio, television can be introduced.
- ♦ **Publication:** Publications like administration report, Library brochure and other programmes notices are also helpful. Besides these programs KSCL was organizing activities such as talks, seminars on various socio-cultural issues, programmes in linguistics, literature, quizzes, book exhibitions, exhibition on local history, local festivals, art, photograph and painting can offer great opportunity to attract the attention of the community, reading week and national library week programmes, film festivals, etc. Literary competitions for school children, programmes on current topical issues, reading camps, etc. are also conducted regularly.

9. Findings,

Facilities: - KSCL housed in building with 3 floors having more than 20,000 sft. A well-furnished A/C Reference and Information Centre, Internet Browsing Centre, minimum nearly 250 persons visit both sections and use the facility per day. Heritage model building



with adequate facilities like drinking water, toilet, space for parking and very attractive children's park and canteen for users and staff. In addition these basic facilities, this library has well equipped with modern ICT infrastructure facilities for library management. Sufficient qualified staffs for organization and management of libraries. KSCL have as much as necessary suitable furniture for the comfort of users.

Collections:- KSCL has adequate information resources including text books, reference books more than 4 Lakhs, magazines more than six hundred, and bound volumes around one thousand and five hundreds ,twenty eight newspapers, CD/DVD and other non-print materials. As well these sources library has maintained a digitized collection of rare and prestigious collection of information sources.

Services: - KSCL provide information, resources for all categories of people in the community for their development, it act as a centers for arts, provide inspiration and courage for young writers and provide chances also. KSLC be active for people come to know themselves and their communities. It performs important partners in child development, teach teens essential life skills, through providing information they demand.

Suggestions and Recommendations

- ♦ **Education:** - In a time education is increasingly expensive; public libraries provide information and educational opportunities free for all people, regardless of their socioeconomic status. KSCL should serve as the "people's University" ought to provide classes and discussion programs and provide for online continuing education programs.
- ♦ **Culture:** - KSCL should serve as catalysts for addressing social problems. Librarian know their communities firsthand, they interact on a daily basis with users from all walks of life. Library should keep and maintained culturally relevant heritage model building.



- ♦ KSCL should offer health awareness programs for people for better living, and should give agriculture literacy programs to farmers for better production.
- ♦ Village industries provide most of the jobs in our current economy. KSCL should take a give necessary steps for the development of village industries.

Employments: - KSCL should work as Champions of youth and provide better chances for carrier advancement programs and provide for employment information regularly.

- ♦ KSCL should conduct ICT awareness programs for its users, for this proper training should be given to the library staff.
- ♦ KSCL act as center for education through providing through sources for lifelong learning.
- ♦ The State Library Service that pools the manpower for the library and information service in a State is very essential for the establishment of a public library system and for providing quality library service in the State.
- ♦ KSLC should take a leadership for take a lot has to be made to improve the public library situation in the state and has to do the needful for restructuring the evading provisions of the Kerala Public Libraries (Kerala Granthasala Sanghom) Act, 1989.
- ♦ A well-organized public library system developed in a hierarchical structure right from the State level to village level through regional, district and taluk levels shall be the foundation of a public library network for the effective sharing of the resources of the more than 7000 public libraries in the State.
- ♦ KSCL should be encouraged to acquire e-resources in addition to print based collection. Like other countries, e-books, e-zines, databases, e-reference sources should form part of collections.
- ♦ KSCL should give proper attention to provide more extension services for society; it should be act as a central hub of other libraries in the State, for ensuring scientific management, there should be adequate number of full time professionals in these libraries



- ♦ Most of the States has provision for Director of Public Libraries. KSCL should try to do needful for such facility to Kerala.
- ♦ There should be at least one Local Library in each ward or division of a local body like City Corporation, Municipality or Grama Panchayath.
- ♦ The membership to the Local Library and Local Body (Corporation, Municipal, Grama Panchayath) Central Library should be free and open to all residents of the concerned local body with provisions to avail inter library services from District and State Central Libraries.
- ♦ It is also recommended to restructure the constitution of library authorities in three levels as: State Library Council, District Library Councils and Local Library Councils.

10. Conclusion

Public library is the best place to acquire knowledge and spend valuable time for the users. Public libraries not only facilitate information needs of the user community, but all so act as overall development of the entire society. Hence restructuring its existing objectives and services and to act as a hub of community development activities. KSCL should develop or strengthening their existing resources and services with the help of information technologies, and to take immediate action for inter library Co-operation and resource sharing through networking. KSCL must popularize and extended its activities and services in the entire State of Kerala. And it should take a leadership for the public library system in Kerala, and KSCL should transform its existing position and working as the central hub of library and information services of the Kerala State.

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